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Remarks by

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to the

Salt Lake City Rotary Club

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It has been a little more than a year since I left Salt Lake City, and I must say I miss my frequent contacts with members of this group.

Much has happened in the Nation's space program during this past year. I think this would be a good occasion to get some perspective on these developments and to evaluate their significance.

The management of NASA was in competent hands when I came to Washington. But the program was coasting on momentum gained in the past decade. Important decisions about the future of the Nation's space program were crying to be made. Critics of the program were taking advantage of this period of uncertainty to spread the impression that NASA had accomplished its historic mission and could now be disbanded.

In fact, at my first press conference in Washington I was asked if I did not feel like the captain of the ill-fated ship Titanic.

They don't ask that kind of question any more, and for good reason. Ten good reasons, in fact.

Briefly, here they are:

1. We have defined a new long-range national space program for the Seventies which will be as challenging, as exciting, and as rewarding as our space achievements of the last decade, but less costly.

2. Since the beginning of this year, this new program for the Seventies has been approved by the President and the Congress, with a strong bi-partisan majority.

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3. This program can be carried out over the next six or eight years at about the present budget level of $3.4 billion. This is a reasonable level which calls for steady space progress at a cost the country can afford. Previous efforts to win approval for a long-range program for the Seventies failed because large spending increases were called for later in the decade. The President did not want such a plan, and we have now worked out a better one.

4. We have come up with a balanced space program for the Seventies. We will increase our capability to do useful work in all the major areas of space activity. We will stress the practical uses of manned and unmanned spacecraft in Earth orbit; we will send unmanned spacecraft on voyages of exploration to the surface of Mars and throughout the solar system; and we will operate improved astronomical observatories in space to help solve fundamental mysteries of the universe.

5. We have chosen the re-usable Space Shuttle as our major investment in new space technology for this decade; and during the past year we have succeeded in re-designing the Shuttle to cut estimated development costs in half without signficant losses in performance. The re-usable Shuttle will give us quick and easy access to space at less cost than present launch vehicles and will encourage new uses of space.

6. We have settled the argument over whether to stress manned or unmanned space missions in the Seventies. The Shuttle will be used for both. We can use whichever method is better for a given mission, or combine the two.

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7. The Space Shuttle will have important military uses. It will make an important contribution to our national security.

8. We have made our new program for the Seventies relevant to the needs of modern America. Our new Earth Resources Technology Satellite, which we expect to launch next month, is an excellent example. Much of what we hope to learn in Earth orbit and at the planets in this decade will help protect the environment of spaceship Earth.

9. Our new space program for the Seventies provides the necessary base for increased international cooperation. We have worked very hard at NASA in the past year to help prepare the way for the space cooperation agreement the President signed in Moscow. But this agreement would have little significance if we did not have the Space Shuttle program underway to develop future uses of space.

10. In short, we again have a national commitment to make space progress a clear expression of our national character and a symbol to the world of what America stands for and works for.

I am very pleased with the progress we have made during my first year at NASA. We have had some very difficult choices to make, but I think we can make a good case for the priorities we have set and the level of effort we have settled on.

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This process of getting NASA re-oriented and moving again in this decade has been very much a team effort, and any credit that history will mete out to those who participated must be widely shared. It has been a team effort within NASA, and between NASA and the White House, and NASA and the Congress. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering have given us valuable guidance. The aerospace industry and the scientific community in general have helped us set priorities and define the Space Shuttle, which when completed should go down in history as one of the most significant advances of this century, along with the aeroplane and the space rocket. Actually, it is a merging of aeroplane and space rocket, and, simple as that may seem in general concept, it has required an unprecedented systems analysis effort within NASA and the aerospace industry to come up with what we think is the design that best meets the country's needs at this time.

To summarize this brief progress report I have just given you, I believe I can say, and I hope you will agree, that the space program of the United States is in good shape and merits your continued support.

We still have one Apollo mission to the Moon scheduled for December of this year, but we definitely have come to the end of an era in American space history and the beginning of a new one.

As you no doubt read a few days ago, Dr. Wernher von Braun announced his decision to retire from NASA and join Fairchild Industries. Although all of us at NASA regret Dr. von Braun's departure very much, it can be cited as an important bit of evidence that the national space program is, indeed, in good shape today. After his major contribution to building the Saturn V rocket that sent Americans to the Moon, Dr. von Braun came to NASA headquarters to help answer the question of what to do next after Apollo. His retirement at this time is a clear signal that NASA's planning problems for this decade have indeed been solved. Wernher von Braun is not the kind of man to walk out on a job half finished. He has helped us through another crisis, he has helped us to another plateau of space progress.

Looking back at the history of the space age, it is easy to identify several different periods: First, there was the period of pioneering in rocketry, during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, when men of vision like Dr. Robert Goddard and Dr. von Braun invented and demonstrated the basic technology that would take us into space. Then came the opening years of the space age in the late 1950s, a period of alarm for this country, but also a period of decisive political action which saw the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the decision by the American people that they wanted a role of leadership in using space for the benefit of mankind. Then came the period of dedication and glorious achievement in the Apollo program, and that blended into the period of uncertainty that we have just been through. Now the uncertainty has ended, and we have entered a new period of fruitful space use based on more productive spacecraft and on a better way of getting them into orbit, the Space Shuttle.

The Space Shuttle which we will build in the next six years draws heavily on the technology developed for the Saturn V. But the Shuttle requires a great step forward to harness the power of the hydrogen-oxygen rocket and use it as a workhorse in Earth orbit. Harnessing the power of the Saturn rocket for practical purposes may not have the glamour of the first flights to the Moon, but it is the basis for my statement that our space program for this decade can be as challenging, as exciting, and as rewarding as our achievements of the last decade, even though less costly.

Another reason why our space program for the Seventies may be refreshingly different from past accomplishments lies in the recently enhanced prospects for significant cooperation in space with the Soviet Union.

All of us at NASA are very enthusiastic about our new assignment, announced by President Nixon in Moscow, to carry out a test docking mission between an Apollo spacecraft and a Soviet Soyuz spacecraft in 1975.

We have already done enough preliminary work with our Soviet colleagues to demonstrate that the joining of American and Soviet spacecraft in Earth orbit is quite feasible from an engineering point of view. Now, after President Nixon's successful Summit mission it appears that this symbolic union of the Apollo and Soyuz spacecraft in the new sea of space is also feasible from the political point of view.

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I would like to stress that this one scheduled international link-up in space is not of great importance in itself. Rendezvous and docking in Earth orbit and in lunar orbit have become routine in the American space program, and the Soviets have demonstrated similar skills.

What is of tremendous historical significance is all the cooperative effort, and all the exercise of good will, that must preceed this otherwise routine space maneuver. And what is more important still is the breakthrough this one scheduled test could provide in the direction of future cooperation.

There has been much favorable comment in the press on the possibilities of future cooperation in space.

Take the lead editorial in the Wall Street Journal for May 26, for example. I would like to quote several paragraphs from this editorial because it not only stresses the potential in U.S. and Soviet cooperation in space, but also supports the point I make about the space program's relevancy to problems we face at home here on Earth:

"The space age competition has meant that both Russians and Americans have had to live in fear of intercontinental nuclear missiles but it also has helped both sides develop and mobilize human resources to achieve spectacular feats of engineering and organization.

"Whether cooperation also can bring positive results in a question that can only be answered with speculation but here, too, the symbolism could prove to be important. Fred Hoyle, a British scientist and futurist, believes that one of the most significant fruits of space exploration -- one that happens to be symbolic -- was the first photograph of planet earth from deep space. He feels that this had a profound psychological effect on earthlings by dramatizing that the planet and its resources are finite. He dates the present intense worldwide concern over environment, ecology and depletion of the earth's resources from that photograph.

"Significantly, the space link-up agreement in Moscow this week was accompanied by an agreement to conduct joint research on these problems of pollution and resources that affect all inhabitants of the planet. This agreement is but another sign of a burgeoning worldwide concern that will be aired further in Stockholm next month at a high-level international meeting on problems of the environment under United Nations auspices.

"Thus, if the Hoyle thesis is accepted, the Soviet-American space link-up agreement may prove to be more than just a stunt designed to conceal fundamental political conflicts and disagreements. It may prove to be symbolic of a mutual awareness of problems of the planet that have overriding importance to the people of all nations, whatever their political orientation. It may symbolize awareness that the earth itself is a spaceship in which the ultimate fate of all earthlings is linked."

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I would also like to quote from an editorial in the New York Times on May 25:

"The decision to have American and Soviet astronauts work together intimately so that space ships from the two nations can rendezvous and dock in the summer of 1975 has, above all, immense political significance.

"In effect, it announces to the world that the leaders of the two nations expect their relations to be sufficiently amicable that each is prepared to open its space installations to the other and let Soviet cosmonauts be trained in this country and their American opposite numbers in the Soviet Union.

"A corollary of all this is the growing likelihood that the chief dividends from space programs will be political gains here on earth. Born in the mad competition for status characteristic of the cold war, manned and unmanned space research has taught both sides how puny are man's resources in facing the mystery and challenge of the universe. As that lesson has sunk in, both sides have come to understand the advantages of cooperation as against useless and wasteful rivalry.

"The rendezvous and docking experiment in 1975" -- continues the New York Times -- "is obviously only a first step. Ahead lie the creation of a joint Soviet-American earth orbital laboratory, a joint permanent manned station on the moon, and eventually a Soviet-American manned expedition to Mars. And, with each step of shared activity in space, cooperation on earth can be expected to become easier and more habitual."

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Well, you can see that the New York Times is already enthusiastically planning our space missions for the 1980s and beyond. I welcome this enthusiasm, I believe this optimism about the future is fully justified.

To return now to the present, I want to close with this thought: it is our determination to continue significant space progress through the Seventies, and to build the Space Shuttle, which makes possible such agreements at the Summit and such realistic optimism about the future of mankind on our planet, on Spaceship Earth.

I thank you.

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